

Trump disbanded it, but climate change panel regroups to release its report

By [Jen Christensen](#), CNN

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(CNN)The Trump administration may have shut down the government advisory committee on climate change started by President Barack Obama, but its members considered the work so important that they did not stop working.

The [Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment](#) was created in 2015 by the Obama administration to help local leaders and policymakers figure out how to apply lessons from the [National Climate Assessment](#). The latest version of that report, released in November, determined that climate change is already hurting the United States and that it could cost the economy [hundreds of billions](#) of dollars and will kill thousands of Americans.

Trump allowed the charter of the advisory committee to expire in August 2017 after his administration showed concern about the political makeup

of the 15-member panel.

"It only has one member from industry," wrote George Kelly, then deputy chief of staff at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in a June 2017 email, the [Washington Post uncovered](#). Kelly said officials needed to decide whether to let the committee "expire as soon as possible," as the "process to gain more balance would take a couple of years to accomplish."

At the invitation of New York's governor, Andrew Cuomo, most of the members of the committee reconvened and became the Science to Climate Action Network, also known as SCAN.

On Thursday, it released its [report](#) and recommendations to help policymakers and community leaders better tackle the daunting problems brought by climate change.

With the support of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, the state of New York and the American Meteorological Society, the panel warns that the country continues to be in harm's way because of its failure to act. For instance, local leaders don't have enough data on climate change to make informed decisions, something that the [Government Accountability Office](#) has noted in its investigations.

Calling climate change a "global catastrophe," Cuomo said that he supports the committee's efforts to help local leaders because the problem needs urgent attention.



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"While the federal government continues to deny climate change and ignore the dire need to strengthen the resilience of our communities, New York and the U.S. Climate Alliance are taking action," he said in a [statement published](#) with the report. "This report will provide important recommendations to communities across the country as we work to address climate change."

Committee Chairman Richard Moss, a visiting senior research scientist at the Earth Institute, said he hopes the work will make local action possible

The committee is working with university groups and regional research networks and will continue to [advise local leaders](#). It will continue to help leaders determine which climate data sets are reliable. It will give technical advice, advising on practical matters like what engineering designs will be more resilient in the face of climate change, and it will help leaders think through the costs and benefits of climate change plans.

In the face of problems like flooding, a problem that has already cost the country billions, it will bring together a collaborative group of experts and leaders to help communities figure out what works and what doesn't

and will help them craft local solutions.

"The point is to take what we know, make it usable for the communities and increase their confidence in weighing the tradeoffs and opportunities that come with different strategies for adaptation and mitigation," Moss said. "We're trying to produce something that adds value for those on the front lines of preparing their communities for climate change."